



108

Greatest Of All Times

*globally selected  
PERSONALITIES*

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Compiled by:

Prof Dr S Ramalingam

28 Jun 1971 <::><::><::> 54 Years



“When something is important enough,  
you do it even if the odds are not in  
your favor.”

Elon Musk

Goalcast



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28 Jun 1971



54 Years

## Elon Musk



Musk in 2022

### Senior Advisor to the President

#### Incumbent

**Assumed office**  
January 20, 2025

**President** [Donald Trump](#)

### **Personal details**

**Born** Elon Reeve Musk


June 28, 1971 (age 53)  
[Pretoria](#), South Africa

**Citizenship**

- South Africa
- Canada
- United States (from 2002)

**Spouses**

- [Justine Wilson](#)

	(m. 2000; div. 2008)
	• <a href="#">Talulah Riley</a>
	(m. 2010; div. 2012)
	(m. 2013; div. 2016)
<b>Domestic partner</b>	<a href="#">Grimes</a> (2018–2021)
<b>Children</b>	14, including <a href="#">Vivian Wilson</a>
<b>Parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Maye Musk</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Errol Musk</a></li> </ul>
<b>Relatives</b>	<a href="#">Musk family</a>
<b>Education</b>	<a href="#">University of Pennsylvania</a> (BA, BS)
<b>Occupation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO and product architect of <a href="#">Tesla</a></li> <li>• Founder, CEO, and chief engineer of <a href="#">SpaceX</a></li> <li>• Owner, CTO and executive chairman of <a href="#">Twitter</a> (now X)</li> <li>• Founder of <a href="#">the Boring Company</a>, <a href="#">X Corp.</a>, and <a href="#">xAI</a></li> <li>• Co-founder of <a href="#">Neuralink</a>, <a href="#">OpenAI</a>, <a href="#">Zip2</a>, and <a href="#">X.com</a> (part of <a href="#">PayPal</a>)</li> <li>• President of the <a href="#">Musk Foundation</a></li> <li>• <i>De facto</i> leader of the <a href="#">Department of Government Efficiency</a> (DOGE) temporary organization</li> </ul>
<b>Awards</b>	<a href="#">Full list</a>
<b>Signature</b>	

**Elon Reeve Musk** (/ˈiːlɒn/ *EE-lon*; born June 28, 1971) is a businessman known for [his](#) [key](#) [roles](#) in [Tesla](#), [SpaceX](#), [PayPal](#), [OpenAI](#) and [Twitter](#) (which he [rebranded as X](#)). Since 2025, he has been a [senior advisor](#) to United States president [Donald Trump](#) and the *de facto* head of the [Department of Government Efficiency](#) (DOGE). Musk is the [wealthiest person in the world](#); as of March 2025, [Forbes](#) estimates [his net worth](#) to be \$320 billion USD.

Born to [a wealthy family](#) in [Pretoria](#), South Africa, Musk emigrated in 1989 to Canada, whose citizenship he had inherited through his mother. He graduated from the [University of Pennsylvania](#) in the U.S. before moving to [California](#) to pursue business ventures. In 1995, Musk co-founded the software company [Zip2](#).

Following its sale in 1999, he co-founded [X.com](#), an online payment company that later merged to form [PayPal](#), which was acquired by [eBay](#) in 2002 for \$1.5 billion. That year, Musk also became a U.S. citizen.

In 2002, Musk founded SpaceX and became its CEO and chief engineer. The company has since led innovations in [reusable rockets](#) and [commercial spaceflight](#). In 2004, Musk joined Tesla, Inc. as an early investor, and became its CEO and product architect in 2008; it has become a market leader in [electric vehicles](#). In 2015, he co-founded [OpenAI](#) to advance [artificial intelligence](#) research, but left its board in 2018. In 2016, Musk co-founded [Neuralink](#), a company focused on [brain-computer interfaces](#), and in 2017 launched [the Boring Company](#), which aims to develop tunnel transportation. Musk was named [Time magazine's Person of the Year](#) in 2021. In 2022, he acquired Twitter, implementing significant changes and rebranding it as X in 2023. In January 2025, he was appointed head of Trump's newly created DOGE.

[Musk's political activities](#) and [views](#) have made him [a polarizing figure](#). He has been criticized for making unscientific and misleading statements, including [COVID-19 misinformation](#) and [promoting conspiracy theories](#). His acquisition of Twitter (now X) was controversial due to a subsequent [increase in hate speech](#) and the [spread of misinformation](#) on the service. He has engaged in political activities in several countries, including as a vocal and financial supporter of Trump. Musk was the largest donor in the [2024 U.S. presidential election](#) and is a supporter of global [far-right](#) figures, causes, and political parties.

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## Business career of Elon Musk

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business\\_career\\_of\\_Elon\\_Musk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_career_of_Elon_Musk)

[Elon Musk](#) is a businessman known predominantly for his leading roles in the automotive company [Tesla, Inc.](#) and the space company [SpaceX](#). Musk is also known for his ownership of technology company [X Corp.](#) and his role in the founding of [the Boring Company](#), [xAI](#), [Neuralink](#), and [OpenAI](#).

In 1995, Elon, co-founded what would later be known as [Zip2](#), later selling the company to [Compaq](#) for \$307 million in 1999. Receiving \$22 million in the process, Musk used \$12 million of

the proceedings to co-found the e-payment company [X.com](#) that same year. In 2000, X.com merged with the online bank [Confinity](#). In 2002, Musk received \$176 million after PayPal acquired [eBay](#) as the companies largest shareholder, and would much later purchase the X.com domain from PayPal, with the intention of creating an "everything app". In 2004, with an investment of \$6.3 million, Musk then became the chairman and majority shareholder of Tesla. In 2016, Musk co-founded the [neurotechnology](#) startup company [Neuralink](#), with an investment of \$100 million, followed by founding the [Boring Company](#) to construct tunnels. In 2022, Musk completed [his acquisition of Twitter](#), becoming the [CEO of Twitter](#), prior to its rebranding to X.

Beginning with his involved with [space exploration](#) companies in early 2001, he founded SpaceX in 2002, with the company attempting the first [rocket launch](#) in 2006. Since 2019, SpaceX been developing [Starship](#), a [reusable, super heavy-lift launch vehicle](#), and in 2015, they began development of the [Starlink](#) for [satellite Internet access](#). Having sent [Starlink terminals to Ukraine](#) in 2022, Musk refused to block [Russian state media](#) on Starlink and later faced criticism over denying access over [Crimea](#).

With Tesla, he assumed leadership as CEO and product architect in 2008. In 2018, Musk was [sued](#) by the SEC for a [tweet](#) stating that funding had been secured for potentially taking Tesla private, later settling with the SEC, with Musk stepping down as Tesla chairman while remaining its CEO. In 2023, shareholders filed a lawsuit, and a jury subsequently found Musk and Tesla not liable. As of 2019, Musk was the longest-tenured CEO of any automotive manufacturer globally, and under the CEO, Tesla has also constructed multiple [lithium-ion battery](#) and [electric vehicle](#) factories, named [Gigafactories](#).

## **Zip2**

In 1995, Elon, his brother [Kimbal](#), and Greg Kouri founded Global Link Information Network, later renamed [Zip2](#). The company developed an Internet city guide with maps, directions, and [yellow pages](#), and marketed it to newspapers. They worked at a small rented office in [Palo Alto](#), with Musk coding the



website every night.<sup>[5]</sup> Musk and his brother's immigration statuses during this period were described by Musk as a "gray area", although Kimbal maintained they were working as illegal immigrants. A [Washington Post](#) exposé from October 2024 reported Musk worked illegally while building the company, citing an email from Musk submitted as evidence during a 2005 defamation trial and the funding agreement from [venture capital](#) firm Mohr Davidow Ventures.

Eventually, Zip2 obtained contracts with [The New York Times](#) and the [Chicago Tribune](#).<sup>[9]</sup> The brothers persuaded the board of directors to abandon a merger with [Citysearch](#); however, Musk's attempts to become CEO were thwarted. [Compaq](#) acquired Zip2 for \$307 million in cash in February 1999, and Musk received \$22 million for his 7 percent share.

### **X.com and PayPal**

In March 1999, Musk co-founded [X.com](#), an online financial services and e-mail payment company with \$12 million of the money he made from the Compaq acquisition. X.com was one of the first [online banks](#) that was [federally insured](#), and over 200,000 customers joined in its initial months of operation.

Musk's friends expressed skepticism about the naming of the online bank, fearing it might have been mistaken for a pornographic site. Musk brushed off their concerns, emphasizing that the name was meant to be straightforward, memorable, and easy to type. Additionally, he was fond of the email addresses derived from it, such as "e@x.com". Although Musk founded the company, investors regarded him as inexperienced and replaced him with [Intuit](#) CEO Bill Harris by the end of the year.

In 2000, X.com merged with the online bank [Confinity](#) to avoid competition, as the latter's money-transfer service [PayPal](#) was more popular than X.com's service. Musk then returned as CEO of the merged company. His preference for [Microsoft](#) over [Unix](#)-based software caused a rift among the company's employees, and eventually led Confinity co-founder [Peter Thiel](#) to resign. With the company suffering from compounding technological issues and the lack of a cohesive business model, the board ousted Musk and replaced him with Thiel in September

2000. Under Thiel, the company focused on the money-transfer service and was renamed PayPal in 2001.

In 2002, PayPal was acquired by [eBay](#) for \$1.5 billion in stock, of which Musk—PayPal's largest shareholder with 11.7% of shares—received \$176 million. In 2017, more than 15 years later, Musk purchased the X.com domain from PayPal for its "sentimental value". In 2022, Musk discussed a goal of creating "X, the everything app".

## SpaceX



**Musk explains Starship capabilities to leaders of North American Aerospace Defense Command, U.S. Northern Command, and Air Force Space Command in 2019 during a trip to Colorado Springs, Colorado.**

In early 2001, Musk became involved with the nonprofit [Mars Society](#) and discussed funding plans to place a [growth-chamber for plants](#) on [Mars](#). In October of the same year, he traveled to [Moscow](#), Russia with [Jim Cantrell](#), [Adeo Rossi](#), and future [Administrator of NASA](#), [Michael D. Griffin](#) to buy refurbished [intercontinental ballistic missiles](#) (ICBMs) that could send the greenhouse [payloads](#) into space. He met with the companies [Lavochkin](#) and [ISC Kosmotras](#); however, Musk was seen as a novice and the group returned to the United States without an agreement to purchase Russian launch services. In February 2002, the group returned to Russia to look for three ICBMs. They had another meeting with ISC Kosmotras and were offered one rocket for \$8 million, which Musk rejected. He instead decided to start a company that could build affordable rockets. With \$100 million of his own money, Musk founded

SpaceX in May 2002 and became the company's CEO and chief engineer.

SpaceX attempted its first launch of the [Falcon 1](#) rocket in 2006. Although the rocket failed to reach [Earth orbit](#), it was awarded a [Commercial Orbital Transportation Services](#) program contract from [NASA](#), now led by Griffin as Administrator. After two more failed attempts that nearly caused Musk and his companies to go bankrupt, SpaceX succeeded in launching the Falcon 1 into orbit in 2008. Later that year, SpaceX received a \$1.6 billion [Commercial Resupply Services](#) contract from NASA for 12 flights of its [Falcon 9](#) rocket and [Dragon spacecraft](#) to the [International Space Station](#) (ISS), replacing the [Space Shuttle](#) after its 2011 [retirement](#). In 2012, the Dragon vehicle docked [with the ISS](#), a first for a commercial spacecraft.



**Musk examining [F9R Dev1](#) debris in 2014**

Working towards its goal of [reusable rockets](#), in 2015 SpaceX successfully landed the [first stage](#) of a Falcon 9 on a land platform. Later landings were achieved on [autonomous spaceport drone ships](#), an ocean-based recovery platform.<sup>[44]</sup> In 2018, SpaceX launched the [Falcon Heavy](#); the [inaugural mission](#) carried Musk's personal [Tesla Roadster](#) as a [dummy payload](#).

Since 2019, SpaceX has been developing [Starship](#), a [reusable, super heavy-lift launch vehicle](#) intended to replace the Falcon 9 and the Falcon Heavy. In 2020, SpaceX launched its first crewed flight, the [Demo-2](#), becoming the first private company to place astronauts into orbit and dock a crewed spacecraft with the ISS. In 2024, NASA awarded SpaceX an \$843 million contract to [deorbit](#) the ISS at the end of its lifespan.



## Starlink



50 Starlink satellites shortly before deployment to low Earth orbit, 2019

In 2015, SpaceX began development of the [Starlink](#) constellation of [low Earth orbit](#) satellites to provide [satellite Internet access](#), with the first two prototype satellites launched in February 2018. A second set of test satellites, and the first large deployment of a piece of the constellation, occurred in May 2019, when the first 60 operational satellites were launched. The total cost of the decade-long project to design, build, and deploy the constellation was estimated by SpaceX in 2020 to be \$10 billion. Some critics, including the [International Astronomical Union](#), have alleged that Starlink [blocks the view of the sky](#) and poses a collision threat to spacecraft.

During the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#), Musk sent [Starlink terminals to Ukraine](#) to provide Internet access and communication. In October 2022, Musk stated that about 20,000 satellite [terminals](#) had been donated to Ukraine, together with free data transfer subscriptions, which cost SpaceX \$80 million. After asking the [United States Department of Defense](#) to pay for further units and future subscriptions on behalf of Ukraine, Musk publicly stated that SpaceX would continue to provide Starlink to Ukraine for free, at a yearly cost to itself of \$400 million. At the same time, Musk refused to block [Russian state media](#) on Starlink, declaring himself "a [free speech](#) absolutist".

In September 2023, Ukraine asked for the activation of Starlink satellites over [Crimea](#) to attack Russian naval vessels located at the port [Sevastopol](#); Musk denied the request, citing concerns that Russia would respond with a nuclear attack.

## Tesla

[Tesla, Inc.](#), originally Tesla Motors, was incorporated in July 2003 by [Martin Eberhard](#) and [Marc Tarpinning](#). Both men

played active roles in the company's early development prior to Musk's involvement. Musk led the [Series A round](#) of investment in February 2004; he invested \$6.35 million, became the majority shareholder, and joined Tesla's board of directors as chairman. Musk took an active role within the company and oversaw [Roadster](#) product design, but was not deeply involved in day-to-day business operations.



#### **Musk before a [Model X](#) at the 2014 Tesla Inc. annual shareholder meeting**

Following a series of escalating conflicts in 2007, and the [financial crisis](#), Eberhard was ousted from the firm. Musk assumed leadership of the company as CEO and product architect in 2008. A 2009 lawsuit settlement with Eberhard designated Musk as a Tesla co-founder, along with Tarpenning and two others. As of 2019, Musk was the longest-tenured CEO of any automotive manufacturer globally. In 2021, Musk nominally changed his title to "Technoking" while retaining his position as CEO.

Tesla began delivery of the Roadster, an electric sports car, in 2008. With sales of about 2,500 vehicles, it was the first [mass production](#) all-electric car to use [lithium-ion battery](#) cells. Tesla began delivery of its four-door [Model S](#) sedan in 2012. A [crossover](#), the [Model X](#) was launched in 2015. A mass-market sedan, the [Model 3](#), was released in 2017. In 2020, the Model 3 became the all-time bestselling plug-in electric car worldwide, and in June 2021 it became the first electric car to sell 1 million units globally. A fifth vehicle, the [Model Y](#) crossover, was launched in 2020, and in December 2023, became the best-selling vehicle of any type, as well as the all-time best-selling electric car. The [Cybertruck](#), an all-electric pickup truck, was unveiled in 2019, and delivered in November 2023. Under Musk, Tesla has also constructed multiple lithium-ion battery and electric vehicle factories, named [Gigafactories](#).

Since its [initial public offering](#) in 2010, Tesla stock has risen significantly; it became the most valuable carmaker in summer 2020, and it entered the [S&P 500](#) later that year. In October 2021, it reached a market capitalization of \$1 trillion, the sixth company in US history to do so. In November 2021, Musk proposed on Twitter to sell some of his Tesla stock. After more than 3.5 million Twitter accounts supported the sale, Musk sold \$6.9 billion of Tesla stock within a week, and a total of \$16.4 billion by year end, reaching the 10% target. In February 2022, [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported that both Musk and his brother Kimbal were under investigation by the [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) (SEC) for possible [insider trading](#) related to the sale. In 2022, Musk unveiled [Optimus](#), a robot being developed by Tesla.<sup>[99]</sup> In June 2023, Musk met with Indian prime minister [Narendra Modi](#) in [New York City](#), stating he was interested in investing in India "as soon as humanly possible".

### **SEC and shareholder lawsuits regarding tweets**

In 2018, Musk was [sued](#) by the SEC for a [tweet](#) stating that funding had been secured for potentially taking Tesla private. The lawsuit characterized the tweet as false, misleading, and damaging to investors, and sought to bar Musk from serving as CEO of [publicly traded companies](#). Two days later, Musk settled with the SEC, without admitting or denying the SEC's allegations. As a result, Musk and Tesla were fined \$20 million each, and Musk was forced to step down for three years as Tesla chairman but was able to remain as CEO. Shareholders filed a lawsuit over the tweet, and in February 2023, a jury found Musk and Tesla not liable. Musk has stated in interviews that he does not regret posting the tweet that triggered the SEC investigation.

In 2019, Musk stated in a tweet that Tesla would build half a million cars that year. The SEC reacted by asking a court to hold him [in contempt](#) for violating the terms of the 2018 settlement agreement. A joint agreement between Musk and the SEC eventually clarified the previous agreement details, including a list of topics about which Musk needed preclearance. In 2020, a judge blocked a lawsuit that claimed a tweet by Musk regarding Tesla stock price ("too high [imo](#)") violated the agreement. [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA)-released records showed that the SEC concluded Musk had

subsequently violated the agreement twice by tweeting regarding "[Tesla's solar roof](#) production volumes and its stock price".

## **SolarCity and Tesla Energy**



**SolarCity solar-panel installation vans in 2009**

Musk provided the initial concept and financial capital for [SolarCity](#), which his cousins [Lyndon](#) and Peter Rive founded in 2006. By 2013, SolarCity was the second largest provider of solar power systems in the United States. In 2014, Musk promoted the idea of SolarCity building an advanced production facility in [Buffalo](#), New York, triple the size of the largest solar plant in the United States. Construction of the [factory](#) started in 2014 and was completed in 2017. It operated as a joint venture with [Panasonic](#) until early 2020.

Tesla acquired SolarCity for \$2 billion in 2016 and merged it with its battery unit to create [Tesla Energy](#). The deal's announcement resulted in a more than 10% drop in Tesla's stock price; at the time, SolarCity was facing liquidity issues. Multiple shareholder groups filed a lawsuit against Musk and Tesla's directors, stating that the purchase of SolarCity was done solely to benefit Musk and came at the expense of Tesla and its shareholders. Tesla directors settled the lawsuit in January 2020, leaving Musk the sole remaining defendant. Two years later, the court ruled in Musk's favor.

## **Neuralink**



**Musk discussing a Neuralink device during a live demonstration in 2020**

In 2016, Musk co-founded [Neuralink](#), a [neurotechnology](#) startup company, with an investment of \$100 million. Neuralink aims to integrate the human brain with [artificial intelligence](#) (AI) by creating devices that are embedded in the brain. Such technology could enhance memory or allow the devices to communicate with software. The company also hopes to develop devices with which to treat neurological conditions such as [Alzheimer's disease](#), [dementia](#), and [spinal cord injuries](#).

In 2019, Musk announced work on a device akin to a [sewing machine](#) that could embed threads into a human brain. In an October 2019 paper that detailed some of Neuralink's research, Musk was listed as the sole author, which rankled Neuralink researchers. At a 2020 live demonstration, Musk described one of their early devices as "a [Fitbit](#) in your skull" that could soon cure paralysis, deafness, blindness, and other disabilities. Many neuroscientists and publications criticized these claims, with [IT Technology Review](#) describing them as "highly speculative" and "neuroscience theater". During the demonstration, Musk revealed a pig with a Neuralink implant that tracked neural activity related to smell. In 2022, Neuralink announced that clinical trials would begin by the end of the year.

Neuralink has conducted further [animal testing](#) on [macaque monkeys](#) at the [University of California, Davis' Primate Research Center](#). In 2021, the company released a video in which a Macaque played the video game [Pong](#) via a Neuralink implant. The company's animal trials—which have caused the deaths of some monkeys—have led to claims of [animal cruelty](#). The [Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine](#) has alleged that Neuralink's animal trials have violated the [Animal Welfare Act](#). Employees have complained that pressure from Musk to accelerate development has led to botched experiments and unnecessary animal deaths. In 2022, a federal probe was launched into possible animal welfare violations by Neuralink. In September 2023, the [Food and Drug Administration](#) approved Neuralink to initiate human trials, and it plans to conduct a six-year study.



## The Boring Company



**Musk during the 2018 inauguration of the  
Boring test tunnel in Hawthorne, California**

In 2017, Musk founded the Boring Company to construct tunnels, and revealed plans for specialized, underground, high-occupancy vehicles that could travel up to 150 miles per hour (240 km/h) and thus circumvent above-ground traffic in major cities. Early in 2017, the company began discussions with [regulatory bodies](#) and initiated construction of a 30-foot (9.1 m) wide, 50-foot (15 m) long, and 15-foot (4.6 m) deep "test trench" on the premises of SpaceX's offices, as that required no permits. The [Los Angeles tunnel](#), less than two miles (3.2 km) in length, debuted to journalists in 2018. It used Tesla Model Xs and was reported to be a rough ride while traveling at suboptimal speeds.

Two tunnel projects announced in 2018, in Chicago and West Los Angeles, have been canceled. However, a tunnel beneath the [Las Vegas Convention Center](#) was completed in early 2021. Local officials have approved further expansions of the tunnel system.

## Twitter/X

Musk expressed interest in buying [Twitter](#) as early as 2017, and had questioned the platform's commitment to [freedom of speech](#). Additionally, his ex-wife [Talulah Riley](#) had urged him to buy Twitter to stop the "[woke](#)-ism". In January 2022, Musk started purchasing Twitter shares, reaching a 9.2% stake by April, making him the largest shareholder. When this was publicly disclosed, Twitter shares experienced the largest intraday price surge since the company's 2013 [initial public offering](#). On April 4, Musk agreed to a deal that would appoint him to Twitter's board of directors and prohibit him from acquiring more than 14.9% of the company. However, on April

13, Musk made a \$43 billion offer to buy Twitter, launching a takeover bid to buy 100% of Twitter's stock at \$54.20 per share. In response, Twitter's board adopted a "poison pill" [shareholder rights plan](#) to make it more expensive for any single investor to own more than 15% of the company without board approval. Nevertheless, by the end of the month Musk had successfully concluded his bid for approximately \$44 billion. This included about \$12.5 billion in loans against his Tesla stock and \$21 billion in [equity financing](#). Tesla's stock market value sank by over \$100 billion the next day in reaction to the deal. He subsequently tweeted to his 86 million followers criticism of Twitter executive [Vijaya Gadde](#)'s policies, which led to some of them engaging in sexist and racist harassment against her. Exactly a month after announcing the takeover, Musk stated that the deal was "on hold" following a report that 5% of Twitter's daily active users were spam accounts. Although he initially affirmed his commitment to the acquisition, he sent notification of his termination of the deal in July; Twitter's board of directors responded that they were committed to holding him to the transaction. On July 12, 2022, Twitter formally sued Musk in the [Delaware Court of Chancery](#) for breaching a legally binding agreement to purchase Twitter. In October 2022, Musk reversed again, offering to purchase Twitter at \$54.20 per share. The acquisition was officially completed on October 27.

Immediately after the acquisition, Musk fired several top Twitter executives including CEO [Parag Agrawal](#); Musk became the CEO instead. He instituted a \$7.99 monthly subscription for a "[blue check](#)", and laid off a significant portion of the company's staff. Musk lessened content moderation, including reinstating accounts like [The Babylon Bee](#). The [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC) noted that Twitter has verified numerous extremists; hate speech also increased on the platform after his takeover.

In December 2022, Musk released [internal documents](#) relating to Twitter's moderation of [Hunter Biden's laptop controversy](#) in the lead-up to the [2020 presidential election](#). Comments on these internal documents by journalists [Matt Taibbi](#), [Bari Weiss](#), [Michael Shellenberger](#) and others were posted on Twitter

as the [Twitter Files](#). Musk and many Republicans alleged the documents showed that the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) (FBI) had engaged in government censorship by ordering Twitter to suppress a [New York Post](#) story about the laptop. Upon review of the documents, Taibbi said he had found no evidence to support the allegation, and Twitter attorneys denied the allegation in a subsequent court filing. The [United States House Committee on the Judiciary](#) held hearings on the Twitter Files on March 9, 2023, at which Taibbi and Shellenberger gave testimony.

In late 2022, Musk promised to step down as CEO after a Twitter poll posted by Musk found that a majority of users wanted him to do so. Five months later, Musk stepped down from [chief executive officer](#) (CEO) and placed former [NBCUniversal](#) executive [Linda Yaccarino](#) in the position and transitioned his role to [executive chairman](#) and [chief technology officer](#) (CTO).

On November 20, 2023, in a U.S. District Court in Texas, X filed a lawsuit stating that [Media Matters for America](#) "manipulated" the X platform, in that it used accounts that followed major brands, and "resorted to endlessly scrolling and refreshing" the feed until it found ads next to extremist posts.

[The Wall Street Journal](#) reported in August 2024 that the \$13 billion Musk borrowed to buy Twitter "is now considered the worst deal in merger finance that banks have participated in since the [2008 to '09 financial crisis](#)", adding that "the allure of banking Elon Musk, providing capital for him to buy a company, not only would reward them handsomely if things went according to plan" but "you can certainly say things have not gone according to plan". *The Washington Post* reported in September 2024 that the company had lost \$24 billion in equity value, "a vaporization of wealth that has little parallel outside the realm of economic or industry-specific crashes, or devastating corporate scandals". Two years after the acquisition, [Fidelity Investments](#) estimated the value of its stake in X that implied the company had lost 79% of its value.

The *Journal* reported in January 2025 that Musk's lead banks hoped to soon begin selling down to other banks the \$13 billion

they had lent him, at 90 to 95 cents on the dollar. Lead banks typically sell down their exposure immediately after a deal closes, but they had been unable to sell the debt since the Twitter deal closed in October 2022. The paper published a Musk quote from an email he reportedly sent to X employees that month, saying "user growth is stagnant, revenue is unimpressive, and we're barely breaking even," though Musk denied sending the email hours after the article was published online.

### Leadership style



**Musk giving a speech to SpaceX employees in 2012**

Musk is often described as a [micromanager](#) and has called himself a "nano-manager". *The New York Times* has characterized his approach as [autocratic](#). Musk does not make formal [business plans](#). He has forced employees to adopt the company's own jargon and launched ambitious, risky, and costly projects against his advisors' recommendations, such as removing front-facing radar from [Tesla Autopilot](#). His insistence on [vertical integration](#) causes his companies to move most production in-house. While this resulted in saved costs for SpaceX's rocket, vertical integration (as of 2018) has caused many usability problems for Tesla's internal corporate software.

Musk's handling of employees—whom he communicates with directly through mass emails—has been characterized as "[carrot and stick](#)", rewarding those "who offer constructive criticism" while also being known to impulsively threaten, swear at, and fire his employees. Musk said he expects his employees to work for long hours, sometimes 80 hours per week. He has his new employees sign strict [non-disclosure agreements](#) and often fires in sprees, such as during the Model 3 "production hell" in 2018. In 2022, Musk revealed plans to fire 10 percent of Tesla's workforce, due to his concerns about the economy. That same month, he suspended [remote work](#) at SpaceX and Tesla and

threatened to fire employees who do not work 40 hours per week in the office. He laid off more than 10 percent of the Tesla workforce in early 2024.

Musk's leadership has been praised by some, who credit it with the success of Tesla and his other endeavors, and criticized by others, who see him as callous and his managerial decisions as "show[ing] a lack of human understanding". The 2021 book [\*Power Play: Tesla, Elon Musk, and the Bet of the Century\*](#) contains anecdotes of Musk berating employees. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that, after Musk insisted on branding his vehicles as "self-driving", he faced criticism from his engineers for putting customer "lives at risk", with some employees resigning in 2017 in consequence.

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## Musk Foundation

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musk\\_Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musk_Foundation)

The **Musk Foundation** is a US-based charitable [foundation](#) funded and directed primarily by [Elon Musk](#). The foundation is dedicated to promoting [renewable energy](#), [crewed space exploration](#), [pediatrics](#), science and engineering education, and the "development of safe [artificial intelligence](#) for the benefit of humanity". At the end of 2022, the foundation had assets of US\$5 billion, \$4.5 billion of which were in the form of shares in the carmaker [Tesla](#).

### Formation and organization

The Musk Foundation was established by Elon Musk and his brother [Kimbal Musk](#) in December 2001. It was initially registered in [Los Angeles](#). It is now based in [Austin](#), the capital of [Texas](#). The foundation has no employees or full-time staff. It is managed by an unpaid [board of directors](#) consisting of Elon Musk and employees of his [family office](#), [Jared Birchall](#) and Matilda Simon.

### Assets and inflows

The foundation was initially endowed with \$2 million. From 2012 to 2015, it received a further \$3 million. In 2016, Elon Musk donated Tesla shares worth \$254 million to the foundation, thus avoiding tax payments that would have been due if he had sold the shares. In 2020, the foundation received another \$4 million. Due to the increase in the price of Tesla shares, the foundation's assets rose to \$3 billion by the end of 2020.



In 2021, Musk donated more Tesla shares to the Musk Foundation, worth \$5.7 billion at the time. According to estimates, he may have avoided up to \$2 billion in taxes that would have been incurred if he had sold the shares. Musk also donated Tesla shares in 2022, this time worth \$1.95 billion. It is not yet known whether and to what extent these went to the Musk Foundation (as of February 2024).

## Donations

From 2002 to 2018, the foundation gave \$25 million directly to nonprofit organizations, nearly half of which went to Musk's [OpenAI](#) which was a nonprofit at the time. By 2020, the foundation had granted around 350 donations with a total volume of an estimated \$100 million, including for Musk's non-profit organizations [Ad Astra](#) and [OpenAI](#). Other donations went to the [University of Pennsylvania](#), the [Wikimedia Foundation](#), which operates [Wikipedia](#), the AI think tank [Future of Life Institute](#), the [X-Prize Foundation](#) for the *Global Learning X-Prize*, the nature conservation organizations [Sierra Club](#) and [National Wildlife Federation](#), [Oxfam](#) and the [Clinton Foundation](#). Other beneficiaries included his brother Kimbal's nonprofit [Big Green](#). Elon Musk's favorite event – the [Burning Man Festival](#) in [Nevada](#) – was also donated to.<sup>[2]</sup> Most of these donations were anonymized.

In 2020, Musk donated \$60,000 to the [Ad Astra School](#) (founded in 2014) in Hawthorne, CA where 5 of the 14 original students were his children. The school closed in 2020 after Musk's children graduated and went online, but has re-opened as the [\[Astra Nova School \]](#) in Bastrop, TX near SpaceX's headquarters. Another \$25,000 went to the [Crossroads School](#) in Santa Monica, attended by his daughter, and \$25,000 to the [Windward School](#), attended by one of his sons.

In September 2021, the Musk Foundation donated \$55 million to [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#) as part of a fundraiser by [SpaceX](#) customer [Jared Isaacman](#)'s. In the same year, it provided \$100 million for technologies to [remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere](#).

In 2022, the foundation awarded – as in the previous year – a total of \$160 million in donation. 10 million of this went to *The Foundation*, a new foundation set up by Elon Musk, which is preparing to establish a school in Austin. *The Foundation* received a further \$100 million in 2023.

## Criticism

Both the selection of recipients of donations and a relatively low payout ratio have been criticized. In 2021 and 2022, the Musk Foundation awarded less than 5% of its assets in donations, after its assets grew to several billion dollars. This means that it fell short of the legal minimum donation required to maintain its tax-exempt status. The [Guardian](#) criticized the fact that the foundation financed various projects of Musk and his family members, although this is not unusual for billionaires and wealthy donors.

The *New York Times* concluded that through 2022, about half of the Musk Foundation's grants went to organizations "tied" to Musk, one of his employees, or one of his companies. Musk's philanthropy would be "largely self-serving." In one instance, after Musk challenged World Food Programme director David Beasley to draft a plan to use money of Musk's that Beasley said could contribute to ending world hunger, Musk instead donated the \$6 billion in question to his own foundation even after Beasley's plan showed that the money could feed 42 million people for a year.

According to the biographer Walter Isaacson, Musk has little interest in philanthropy. He believes that he can do more for humanity by leaving his money in his companies and pursuing the goals of sustainable energy, space exploration and AI safety with them.

On December 12, 2024, *The New York Times* reported the foundation again awarded less than 5% of its assets in donations in 2024.

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## About The Book

The **#1 New York Times** and global bestseller from Walter Isaacson—the acclaimed author of *Steve Jobs*, *Einstein: His Life and World*, *Benjamin Franklin*, and *Leonardo da Vinci*—is the astonishingly intimate story of the most fascinating, controversial innovator of modern times. For two years, Isaacson shadowed Elon

**Musk as he executed his vision for electric vehicles at Tesla, space exploration with SpaceX, the AI revolution, and the takeover of Twitter and its conversion to X. The result is the definitive portrait of the mercurial pioneer that offers clues to his political instincts, future ambitions, and overall worldview.**

When Elon Musk was a kid in South Africa, he was regularly beaten by bullies. One day a group pushed him down some concrete steps and kicked him until his face was a swollen ball of flesh. He was in the hospital for a week. But the physical scars were minor compared to the emotional ones inflicted by his father, an engineer, rogue, and charismatic fantasist.

His father's impact on his psyche would linger. He developed into a tough yet vulnerable man-child, prone to abrupt Jekyll-and-Hyde mood swings, with an exceedingly high tolerance for risk, a craving for drama, an epic sense of mission, and a maniacal intensity that was callous and at times destructive.

At the beginning of 2022—after a year marked by SpaceX launching thirty-one rockets into orbit, Tesla selling a million cars, and him becoming the richest man on earth—Musk spoke ruefully about his compulsion to stir up dramas. “I need to shift my mindset away from being in crisis mode, which it has been for about fourteen years now, or arguably most of my life,” he said.

It was a wistful comment, not a New Year's resolution. Even as he said it, he was secretly buying up shares of Twitter, the world's ultimate playground. Over the years, whenever he was in a dark place, his mind went back to being bullied on the playground. Now he had the chance to own the playground.

For two years, Isaacson shadowed Musk, attended his meetings, walked his factories with him, and spent hours interviewing him, his family, friends, coworkers, and adversaries. The result is the revealing inside story, filled with amazing tales of triumphs and turmoil, that addresses the question: are the demons that drive Musk also what it takes to drive innovation and progress?

#### About The Author



### Walter Isaacson

Walter Isaacson is the bestselling author of biographies of Jennifer Doudna, Leonardo da Vinci, Steve Jobs, Benjamin Franklin, and Albert Einstein. He is a professor of history at Tulane and was CEO of the Aspen Institute, chair of CNN, and editor of *Time*. He was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2023. Visit him at [Isaacson.Tulane.edu](https://isaacson.tulane.edu).

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## List of awards and honors received by Elon Musk

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_awards\\_and\\_honors\\_received\\_by\\_Elon\\_Musk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_awards_and_honors_received_by_Elon_Musk)

Business magnate and technologist [Elon Musk](#) is recognized for his design and engineering work on Tesla vehicles and SpaceX rockets and his efforts to combat [global warming](#). For his [renewable energy](#) work and advocacy, he has received several environmentalist awards, including the [National Wildlife Federation's](#) Connie Award and a [Global Green](#) award. In part for his contributions to space travel, Musk was elected a Fellow of the [Royal Society](#) in 2018, was listed among the [Time 100 Most Influential People in the World](#) in 2010, 2013, 2018 and 2021, and was ranked joint-first on the [Forbes](#) list of the "Most Innovative Leaders of 2019". On December 13, 2021 *Time* magazine named him [Person of the Year](#).

### Awards and honors



**Musk receiving the 2014 Edison Achievement Award**



### **Musk receiving the Order of Defence Merit from the Brazilian Armed Forces in 2022**

- In 2006, Musk was a member of the [United States National Academy of Sciences](#) Aeronautics and Space Engineering Board.
- [Inc. magazine](#) Entrepreneur of the Year award for 2007 for his work on Tesla and SpaceX.
- 2007 Index Design award for his design of the Tesla Roadster.
- [Global Green](#) 2006 product design award for his design of the Tesla Roadster, presented by [Mikhail Gorbachev](#).
- [American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics](#) George Low award for "the most outstanding contribution in the field of space transportation in 2007/2008". Musk was recognized for his design of the [Falcon 1](#), the first privately developed liquid-fuel rocket to reach orbit.
- [National Wildlife Federation](#) 2008 National Conservation Achievement award for Tesla and SolarCity. Other 2008 recipients include journalist [Thomas Friedman](#), U.S. Senator [Patrick Leahy](#) (D-VT), and Florida Governor [Charlie Crist](#).
- [National Space Society](#)'s Von Braun Trophy in 2008/2009, given for leadership of "the most significant achievement in space". Prior recipients include [Burt Rutan](#) and [Steve Squyres](#).
- Honorary graduate of the [University of Surrey](#) in 2009.
- Listed as one of [Time](#)'s 100 people who most affected the world in 2010.
- The world governing body for aerospace records, [Fédération Aéronautique Internationale](#), presented Musk in 2010 with the highest award in air and space, the FAI Gold Space Medal, for designing the first privately developed rocket to reach orbit. Prior recipients include [Neil Armstrong](#), [Burt Rutan](#) of [Scaled Composites](#) and [John Glenn](#).
- Named as one of the 75 most influential people of the 21st century by [Esquire](#) magazine.
- Recognized as a [Living Legend of Aviation](#) in 2010 by the Kitty Hawk Foundation for creating the successor to the Space Shuttle (Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft). Other recipients include [Buzz Aldrin](#) and [Richard Branson](#).



- In February 2011, *Forbes* listed Musk as one of "America's 20 Most Powerful CEOs 40 And Under."
- In June 2011, Musk was awarded the US\$250,000 [Heinlein Prize for Advances in Space Commercialization](#)
- In 2012, Musk was awarded the [Royal Aeronautical Society's](#) highest award: a gold medal.
- In 2013, Musk was named the [Fortune](#) Businessperson of the year for SpaceX, SolarCity, and Tesla.
- Awarded the President's award for Exploration and Technology of the [Explorers Club](#) at the annual gala on March 16, 2014.
- In 2014, Elon Musk was honored with an [Edison Achievement Award](#) for his "commitment to innovation throughout his career".
- 2015 at [Yale's](#) 314th Commencement Ceremony, received Honorary Doctorate in Engineering and Technology.
- In 2015, he was awarded [IEEE Honorary Membership](#).
- In June 2016, [Business Insider](#) named Musk one of the "Top 10 Business Visionaries Creating Value for the World" along with [Mark Zuckerberg](#) and [Sal Khan](#).
- In May 2017, Musk was awarded the [Oslo Business for Peace Award](#).
- In 2018, Musk was ranked 25th on [Forbes list of The World's Most Powerful People](#).
- Musk was elected a [Fellow of the Royal Society \(FRS\)](#) in 2018.
- Listed among the [Time 100 Most Influential People in the World](#) in 2010, 2013, 2018 and 2021.
- Musk was awarded as member (fifth class) of the Most Admirable [Order of the Direkgunabhorn](#) on March 4, 2019, for his contribution in the rescue at Tham Luang cave, Chiang Rai Province, Thailand.
- In 2019, Musk was awarded the [Starmus Festival's Stephen Hawking Medal for Science Communication](#)
- Musk was listed joint first on the *Forbes* list of the "Most Innovative Leaders of 2019".
- Musk was cited as one of the Top 100 most influential Africans by [New African](#) magazine in 2020.
- On December 1, 2020, Musk was awarded the [Axel Springer Award](#).<sup>[42]</sup>
- Musk ranked No.1 on Businessperson Of The Year 2020 List By [Fortune](#) Magazine.
- On January 7, 2021, Musk was ranked as the wealthiest person in the world according to Bloomberg.
- On January 10, 2021, Musk was ranked #1 on *Forbes's* [Billionaires List](#).
- [Financial Times](#) named Musk 2021 [Person of the Year](#) for his contribution to accelerate the world's auto industry towards EVs.
- Musk added to [Newsweek](#) Hall of fame for his disruption in Auto and Space Industry.
- On December 13, 2021, *Time* magazine named Musk [Person of the Year](#).
- On February 9, 2022, [National Academy of Engineering](#) announced that Musk was among their new, peer-elected members, an award considered to be *among the highest professional distinctions accorded*

to an engineer, "for breakthroughs in the design, engineering, manufacturing, and operation of reusable launch vehicles and sustainable transportation and energy systems".

- On May 20, 2022, Musk was awarded with the [Order of Defence Merit](#) by the Brazilian government after negotiating the launch of the [Starlink](#) internet service in the Amazon rainforest.
- On January 6, 2023, [Guinness World Records](#) reported that Musk broke a world record for the largest loss of wealth at approximately \$182 billion, as estimated by [Forbes](#).

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## Elon Musk filmography

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elon\\_Musk\\_filmography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elon_Musk_filmography)

[Elon Musk](#) is an American businessman and investor who has made numerous [cameo appearances](#) in films and television shows as himself. These appearances include [Iron Man 2](#), [The Simpsons](#), [South Park](#), [The Big Bang Theory](#), [Young Sheldon](#) and [Rick and Morty](#). He has also made appearances in many documentary films.

### Films

Year	Title	Role(s)	Notes
2005	<a href="#">Thank You for Smoking</a>	Valet	Uncredited <a href="#">cameo</a> ; also executive producer
2010	<a href="#">Iron Man 2</a>	Himself	Cameo
2010	<a href="#">Dumbstruck</a>	—	Executive producer
2013	<a href="#">Machete Kills</a>	Himself	Cameo
2014	<a href="#">Transcendence</a>		
2016	<a href="#">Why Him?</a>		
2019	<a href="#">Men in Black: International</a>		Uncredited cameo

### Television

Year	Title	Role	Notes
2015	<a href="#">The Simpsons</a>	Himself	Episode: " <a href="#">The Musk Who Fell to Earth</a> "
2015	<a href="#">The Big Bang Theory</a>		Episode: " <a href="#">The Platonic Permutation</a> "
2016	<a href="#">South Park</a>		Three episodes: " <a href="#">Members Only</a> ", " <a href="#">Not Funny</a> ", " <a href="#">The End of Serialization as We Know It</a> "

2016–2018	<a href="#">Mars</a>		Six episodes
2017	<a href="#">Young Sheldon</a>		Episode: " <a href="#">A Patch, a Modem, and a Zantac</a> "; cameo
2019	<a href="#">Rick and Morty</a>	Elon Tusk	Episode: " <a href="#">One Crew over the Crewcoo's Morty</a> "; cameo
2021	<a href="#">Saturday Night Live</a>	Himself and various characters	<a href="#">Season 46, Episode 18</a>

## Documentaries

Year	Title	Role
2011	<a href="#">Revenge of the Electric Car</a>	Himself
2015	<a href="#">Racing Extinction</a>	
2016	<a href="#">Lo and Behold</a>	
2018	<a href="#">Do You Trust This Computer?</a>	
2022	<a href="#">Return to Space</a>	

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## Public Image

# Elon Musk

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_image\\_of\\_Elon\\_Musk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_image_of_Elon_Musk)

Businessman and political activist [Elon Musk](#) is a focal point of extensive press coverage, with public attitudes towards him fluctuating at various points throughout his career.

Although his ventures have been highly influential within their separate industries starting in the 2000s, Musk only became a public figure in the early 2010s. He has been described as an eccentric who makes spontaneous and impactful decisions, while also frequently making controversial statements, contrary to other billionaires who prefer reclusiveness to protect their businesses. Musk's actions and [his expressed views](#) have made him a polarizing figure. Biographer Ashlee Vance described people's opinions of Musk as polarized due to his "part philosopher, part [troll](#)" persona on Twitter.

Musk has been described as an American [oligarch](#) due to his extensive influence over public discourse, social media, industry, politics, and government policy. His influence in the [second presidency of Donald](#)

[Trump](#) led some to call him the "actual president-elect", "shadow president" or "co-president".

### **Accolades**



**Musk receiving the Order of Defence Merit from the Brazilian Armed Forces in 2022**

Awards for his contributions to the development of the [Falcon rockets](#) include the [American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics](#) George Low Transportation Award in 2008, the [Fédération Aéronautique Internationale](#) Gold Space Medal in 2010, and the [Royal Aeronautical Society](#) Gold Medal in 2012. In 2015, he received an honorary doctorate in engineering and technology from [Yale University](#) and an [Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers](#) [Honorary Membership](#). Musk was elected a [Fellow of the Royal Society](#) (FRS) in 2018. In 2022, Musk was elected to the [National Academy of Engineering](#).

[Time](#) has listed Musk as [one of the most influential people in the world](#) in 2010, 2013, 2018, and 2021. Musk was selected as *Time's* "[Person of the Year](#)" for 2021. Then *Time* editor-in-chief [Edward Felsenthal](#) wrote that, "Person of the Year is a marker of influence, and few individuals have had more influence than Musk on life on Earth, and potentially life off Earth too."

### **Musk Foundation**

Musk is president of the Musk Foundation he founded in 2001, whose stated purpose is to: provide solar-power energy systems in disaster areas; support research, development, and advocacy (for interests including human space exploration, [pediatrics](#), renewable energy and "safe artificial intelligence"); and support science and engineering educational efforts.

As of 2020, the foundation had made 350 donations. Around half of them were made to scientific research or education nonprofits. Notable beneficiaries include the [Wikimedia Foundation](#), his alma mater the

University of Pennsylvania, and his brother Kimbal's nonprofit [Big Green](#). From 2002 to 2018, the foundation gave \$25 million directly to nonprofit organizations, nearly half of which went to Musk's OpenAI, which was a nonprofit at the time. The foundation also allocated \$100 million of donations to be used to establish a new higher education university in Texas.

In 2012, Musk took [the Giving Pledge](#), thereby committing to give the majority of [his wealth](#) to charitable causes either during his lifetime or in his will. He has endowed prizes at the [Xprize Foundation](#), including \$100 million to reward improved [carbon capture](#) technology.

[Vox](#) said in February 2021, "the Musk Foundation is almost entertaining in its simplicity and yet is strikingly opaque", noting that its website was only 33 words in plain-text. In 2020, *Forbes* gave Musk a philanthropy score of 1, because he had given away less than 1% of his net worth. In November 2021, Musk donated \$5.7 billion of Tesla's shares to charity, according to regulatory filings. However, [Bloomberg News](#) noted that all of it went to his own foundation, bringing Musk Foundation's assets up to \$9.4 billion at the end of 2021. The foundation disbursed \$160 million to nonprofits that year. Reporting by *The New York Times* found that in 2022, the Musk Foundation gave away \$230 million less than the minimum required by law to maintain tax-deductible status, and that in 2021 and 2022 over half the foundation's funds went to causes connected to Musk, his family, or his businesses.

### **In popular culture**

Musk was a partial inspiration for the characterization of [Tony Stark](#) in the [Marvel](#) film *[Iron Man](#)* (2008). Musk also had a cameo appearance in the film's 2010 sequel, *[Iron Man 2](#)*. Musk has made cameos and appearances in other films such as *[Machete Kills](#)* (2013), *[Why Him?](#)* (2016), and *[Men in Black: International](#)* (2019). Television series in which he has appeared include *[The Simpsons](#)* ("The Musk Who Fell to Earth", 2015), *[The Big Bang Theory](#)* ("The Platonic Permutation", 2015), *[South Park](#)* ("Members Only", 2016), *[Young Sheldon](#)* ("A Patch, a Modem, and a Zantac®", 2017), *[Rick and Morty](#)* ("One Crew over the Crewcoo's Morty", 2019). He contributed interviews to the documentaries *[Racing Extinction](#)* (2015) and *[Lo and Behold](#)* (2016).

Musk hosted *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) in May 2021. In August 2024 cast member [Bowen Yang](#) said that a male host who had "made multiple cast members cry" was the worst behaved host he had witnessed on SNL. Cast member [Chloe Fineman](#) confirmed that the host was Musk and said that his behavior had made her cry. Musk responded that his behavior was due to believing that the material was not funny.



## 2018 cannabis incident

In September 2018, Musk was interviewed on [The Joe Rogan Experience](#) podcast, during which he appeared to smoke a [joint](#). In 2022, Musk said that he and other SpaceX employees had subsequently been required to undergo random drug tests for about a year following the incident, as required by the [Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988](#) for federal contractors. In a 2019 [60 Minutes](#) interview, Musk had said, "I do not smoke [pot](#). As anybody who watched that podcast could tell, I have no idea how to smoke pot."

## Gaming

In his leisure time, he plays video games including [Quake](#), [Diablo IV](#), [Elden Ring](#), and [Polytopia](#).

In January 2025, several online influencers and game streamers claimed Musk cheated on [Path of Exile 2](#) and [Diablo IV](#) by hiring outside services to invest hours of play into his accounts. Musk initially responded by criticizing one of his accusers, the YouTuber [Asmongold](#). Musk later briefly took away Asmongold's [verification](#) on Twitter and leaked direct messages between the two of them. Musk's ex-partner Grimes defended his accomplishments saying that she had witnessed many of his [Diablo IV](#) records. Musk has since admitted to using account boosting services while stating that "It's impossible to beat players in Asia if you don't."

In 2024 and 2025 Musk criticized the video game [Assassin's Creed Shadows](#) and its creator [Ubisoft](#) for "woke" content. In 2024 Musk posted to X that "DEI kills art" and specified the inclusion of the historical figure [Yasuke](#) in the Assassin's Creed game as offensive. Ubisoft responded by saying that Musk's comments were "just feeding hatred" and that they were focused on producing a game not pushing politics. In 2025 after Musk called Shadows a "terrible game" and [Hasan Piker](#) a "sellout" along with "Hasan is a fraud," for promoting it the game's official X account replied "is that what the guy playing your Path of Exile 2 account told you?" The post's [ratio](#) was significantly in Ubisoft's favor.

## Private jet usage

Musk uses a private jet owned by Falcon Landing LLC, a SpaceX-linked company, and acquired a second jet in August 2020. His heavy use of the jets—which flew over 150,000 miles in 2018 alone—and the consequent [fossil fuel](#) usage have received criticism. Musk's flight usage is tracked on social media through [ElonJet](#). After Musk said that his son X Æ A-Xii had been harassed by a stalker after the account posted the airport at which his jet had landed, Musk banned the ElonJet account on Twitter, as well as the accounts of journalists that posted stories regarding the incident, including [Donie O'Sullivan](#), [Keith Olbermann](#), and journalists from [The New York Times](#), [The Washington Post](#), CNN, and [The Intercept](#). Musk equated the reporting to [doxxing](#). Police do not

believe there is a link between the account and alleged stalker. Musk later took a Twitter poll on whether the journalists' accounts should be reinstated, which resulted in reinstating the accounts.

### **Nazi salute controversy**



**Protesters with anti-Elon Musk signs in Washington, D.C., February 2025**

In his speech during the [second inauguration of Donald Trump](#), Musk thumped his right hand over his heart, fingers spread wide, and then extended his right arm out, emphatically, at an upward angle, palm down and fingers together. He then repeated the gesture to the crowd behind him. As he finished the gestures, he said to the crowd, "My heart goes out to you. It is thanks to you that the future of civilization is assured." The gesture was viewed as a [Nazi](#) or [Roman salute](#) by some, including politicians [Yolanda Díaz](#), [Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez](#), and [Jerry Nadler](#), as well as historian of fascism [Ruth Ben-Ghiat](#). Austria's [Green Party](#) and Germany's [Die Linke](#) called for Musk to be banned from entering their respective countries, citing the salute and his support for right-wing extremism and ongoing interference in European politics.<sup>[85][86]</sup> Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) said Musk was "falsely smeared".

Musk derided the claims as being politicized, in one post he wrote: "The 'everyone is Hitler' attack is sooo tired", but did not explicitly deny the claims. The [Anti-Defamation League](#) stated that Musk did not make a Nazi salute, but "made an awkward gesture in a moment of enthusiasm". Jared Holt from the [Institute for Strategic Dialogue](#), which tracks online hate, also said that he is skeptical it was on purpose, and that it could indicate a sort of gesture of thanks to the crowd. However, former ADL national director [Abraham Foxman](#) described the gesture as a "[Heil Hitler](#) Nazi salute". In further response to the events, Musk posted a series of puns about Nazis on Twitter, which the ADL condemned as "inappropriate" and "highly offensive". Various media outlets, including the [Associated Press](#), reported that regardless of what Musk meant, his gesture was widely embraced by right-wing extremists and [neo-Nazis](#).

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# Elon Musk protesters gather at Tesla showrooms

*The protesters are trying to escalate a movement targeting Tesla dealerships and vehicles in opposition to Musk.*



**Protesters opposing billionaire Elon Musk gather outside a Tesla dealership in Acton, London, UK.**

Crowds [protesting](#) billionaire Elon Musk's purge of the US government under President Donald Trump have been congregating outside Tesla dealerships throughout the US, and in some cities in Europe, in the latest attempt to put a dent in the enormous fortune of the world's richest man.

The protesters are trying to escalate a movement targeting Tesla dealerships and vehicles in opposition to Musk's role as the head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, where he's gained access to sensitive data and shut down entire agencies as he attempts to slash government spending.

Most of Musk's estimated \$340bn fortune consists of the stock he holds in the electric vehicle company that he continues to run while also working alongside Trump.

Tesla Takedown has been organised by a group that includes disillusioned owners of the carmaker's vehicles, celebrities such as actor John Cusack, and at least one Democratic Party lawmaker, Representative Jasmine Crockett from Dallas.

Earlier protests were somewhat sporadic.

But Saturday's demonstrations mark the first attempt to surround all 277 of the carmaker's showrooms and service centres in the US in hopes of deepening a recent decline in the company's sales.

In front of the New York store in Manhattan, between 500 and 1,000 people gathered, demanding Musk's resignation from government.

The protesters were gathered at the call of environmentalists from Planet Over Profit, who believe that "stopping Musk will save lives and protect our democracy."

For Amy Neifeld, a 70-year-old American psychologist who had not taken to the streets since the anti-Vietnam War protests in the 1970s, Elon Musk is leading the United States towards "fascism".

"I'm Jewish and I grew up with a deep awareness of what fascism is. And it's only gotten worse since the election" of Donald Trump, she told the AFP news agency.

"We have to do something very quickly, because he's moving very quickly," Neifeld added.



**A demonstrator holds a sign featuring images of Tesla CEO Elon Musk and US President Donald Trump, during a rally against Elon Musk during a protest outside a Tesla dealership in the Georgetown neighbourhood of Washington, DC, US.**

In London, about two dozen protesters held signs lambasting Musk outside a Tesla dealership as passing cars and trucks tooted horns in support.

One of the signs displayed at the London protest showed a photo of Musk next to an image of Adolf Hitler making the Nazi salute — a gesture that Musk has been accused of reprising shortly after Trump's January 20 inauguration.

A person in a tyrannosaurus rex costume held another sign with a picture of Musk's straight-arm gesture that said, "You thought the Nazis were extinct. Don't buy a Swasticar."

"We just want to get loud, make noise, make people aware of the problems that we're facing," Cam Whitten, an American who showed up at the London protest told The Associated Press.

Some people opposed to Musk have gone beyond protests and set Tesla vehicles on fire and committed other acts of vandalism that US Attorney General Pam Bondi has decried as "domestic terrorism". Musk indicated he was dumbfounded by the attacks during a March 20 company meeting and said the vandals should "stop acting psycho".

Crockett and other Tesla Takedown supporters have been stressing the importance of Saturday's protests to remain peaceful.

But police were investigating a fire that destroyed seven Tesla vehicles in northwestern Germany early Saturday morning. It was not immediately clear if the blaze, which was extinguished by firefighters, was related to the Tesla Takedown protests.

Meanwhile, a growing number of consumers who bought Tesla vehicles before Musk allied himself with Trump have been looking to sell or trade in their cars, while others have slapped on bumper stickers seeking to distance themselves from the billionaire's efforts to prune or shut down government agencies.

But Musk did not appear concerned about an extended slump in sales of new Tesla cars in his March 20 address to employees. He reassured the workers that the company's Model Y, which is undergoing a refresh, would remain "the best-selling car on Earth again this year."

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**Elon Musk to step down from DOGE after \$1 trillion deficit reduction.**

<https://www.livemint.com/news/us-news/elon-musk-to-step-down-from-doge-after-1-trillion-deficit-reduction-heres-what-he-said-11743179099694.html>



*Elon Musk announced he will leave his role in the Trump administration at the end of May after leading a \$1 trillion deficit reduction as head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). DOGE claims it has saved Americans \$130 billion so far.*



**Tesla CEO Elon Musk wears a Trump Was Right About Everything hat while attending a cabinet meeting at the White House in Washington on March 24.**

Tech billionaire Elon Musk on Thursday announced that he plans to step down from his role in the Donald Trump administration at the end of May after overseeing a massive \$1 trillion reduction in the US deficit. Musk, who was brought in as a "special government employee" for a 130-day term, has been spearheading government cost-cutting efforts as head of the [Department of Government Efficiency \(DOGE\)](#).

**Musk: 'A revolution in Government'**

[Elon Musk](#) in an interview with Fox News, described his tenure as a historic overhaul of federal spending.

"This is a revolution. And I think it might be the biggest revolution in government since the original revolution," he said. "At the end of the day, America's going to be in much better shape. It's going to be a fantastic future."

Musk, 53, who also leads Tesla and SpaceX, and owns social media platform X, has been both praised and criticised for his aggressive approach to cutting government



spending. DOGE, an agency staffed by engineers and entrepreneurs, has already laid off tens of thousands of federal workers and slashed funding for various programmes.

### **Musk confirms 130-day tenure**

When asked if he would stay beyond his 130-day term, Musk said he believes his work will be largely complete by then.

"I think we will have accomplished most of the work required to reduce the deficit by \$1 trillion within that time frame," he said.

DOGE claims on its website that, as of March 27, it has saved Americans \$130 billion, or approximately \$807 per taxpayer.

### **Cutting waste and fraud: 'A 15% reduction is achievable'**

Musk and his team of seven DOGE members—Steve Davis, Joe Gebbia, Aram Moghaddassi, Brad Smith, Anthony Armstrong, Tom Krause, and Tyler Hassen—detailed their efforts to slash waste, fraud, and abuse in various government agencies.

"We want to reduce spending by eliminating waste and fraud and reduce spending by 15 per cent, which seems really quite achievable," Musk told Special Report executive editor Bret Baier.

"The government is not efficient, and there's a lot of waste and fraud. So we feel confident that a 15 per cent reduction can be done without affecting any of the critical government services."

### **Federal credit cards: 'Clearly, this doesn't make sense'**

One key area DOGE has focused on is federal credit card usage. According to DOGE member Steve Davis, there are approximately 4.6 million federal government credit cards for around 2.3 to 2.4 million employees.

"This doesn't make sense," Davis said. "So one of the things all of the teams have worked on is we've worked for the agencies and said, 'Do you need all of these credit cards? Are they being used? Can you tell us physically where they are?'"

[Musk](#) agreed, calling the situation absurd.

"Clearly there should not be more credit cards than there are people," he said.

### Critics call for oversight

Despite the administration's claims of efficiency, critics argue DOGE has been given too much power and lacks proper oversight. Opponents claim Musk's team has cancelled federal contracts and made cuts without congressional approval.

[Musk](#), however, dismissed the criticism, saying his team takes a careful approach to every decision.

"They may characterise it as shooting from the hip, but it is anything but that," Musk said. "We measure twice, if not thrice, and cut once."

He also acknowledged the possibility of errors.

"Which is not to say that we don't make mistakes. If we were to approach this with the standard of making no mistakes at all, that would be like saying someone in baseball has got to bat a thousand. That's impossible. So when we do make mistakes, we correct them quickly and we move on."

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## Elon Musk

American entrepreneur

<https://www.britannica.com/money/Elon-Musk>

**Elon Musk** (born June 28, 1971, [Pretoria](#), South Africa) is a [South African](#)-born American [entrepreneur](#) who cofounded the electronic-payment firm [PayPal](#) and formed [SpaceX](#), maker of launch vehicles and [spacecraft](#). He was also one of the first significant investors in, as well as [chief executive officer](#) of, the [electric car](#) manufacturer [Tesla](#). In addition, Musk

acquired [Twitter \(later X\)](#) in 2022. Musk leads the [Department of Government Efficiency](#) (DOGE) in U.S. Pres. [Donald Trump's second administration](#). Musk is the world's richest person, with a net worth of \$393 billion, as of 2025.

### **Early life**

Musk was born to a South African father and a Canadian mother. He displayed an early talent for [computers](#) and entrepreneurship. At age 12 he created a [video game](#) and sold it to a computer magazine. In 1988, after obtaining a Canadian passport, Musk left South Africa because he was unwilling to support [apartheid](#) through [compulsory military service](#) and because he sought the greater economic opportunities available in the [United States](#).

### **PayPal and SpaceX**

Musk attended [Queen's University](#) in Kingston, Ontario, and in 1992 he transferred to the [University of Pennsylvania](#), Philadelphia, where he received bachelor's degrees in [physics](#) and [economics](#) in 1997. He enrolled in graduate school in physics at [Stanford University](#) in [California](#), but he left after only two days because he felt that the [Internet](#) had much more potential to change society than work in physics. In 1995 he founded [Zip2](#), a company that provided maps and business directories to online newspapers. In 1999 Zip2 was bought by the computer manufacturer [Compaq](#) for \$307 million, and Musk then founded an online financial services company, X.com, which later became PayPal, which specialized in transferring money online. The online auction [eBay](#) bought PayPal in 2002 for \$1.5 billion.

Musk was long convinced that for life to survive, humanity has to become a multiplanet species. However, he was dissatisfied with the great expense of [rocket](#) launchers. In 2002 he founded Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX) to make more affordable rockets. Its first two rockets were the [Falcon 1](#) (first launched in 2006) and the larger Falcon 9 (first launched in 2010), which were designed to cost much less than competing rockets. A third rocket, the [Falcon Heavy](#) (first launched in 2018), was designed to carry 117,000 pounds (53,000 kg) to orbit, nearly twice as much as its largest competitor, the [Boeing Company's](#) Delta IV Heavy, for one-third the cost. The Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy eventually dominated the [launch vehicle](#) market, and in 2024 more than half of the world's orbital launches were done by SpaceX.

SpaceX has announced the successor to the Falcon 9 and the Falcon Heavy: the Super Heavy–Starship system. The Super Heavy first stage would be capable of lifting 100,000 kg (220,000 pounds) to [low Earth orbit](#). The payload would be the Starship, a spacecraft designed for providing fast [transportation](#) between cities on Earth and building bases on the Moon and Mars.

SpaceX also developed the [Dragon](#) spacecraft, which carries supplies to the [International Space Station](#) (ISS). Dragon can carry as many as seven astronauts, and it had a crewed flight carrying astronauts Doug Hurley and Robert Behnken to the ISS in 2020. The first test flights of the Super Heavy–Starship system launched in 2020. In addition to being CEO of SpaceX, Musk was also chief designer in building the Falcon rockets, Dragon, and Starship. SpaceX is contracted to build the lander for the astronauts returning to the Moon by 2026 as part of [NASA's Artemis](#) space program.

SpaceX has also developed the [Starlink](#) satellite network, which provides Internet service. As of 2025 there are about 7,000 working Starlink satellites, accounting for more than half of all active satellites. Starlink is a [megaconstellation](#), or satellite Internet constellation, with more than three million subscribers as of 2024.

## **Tesla**

Musk had long been interested in the possibilities of electric cars, and in 2004 he became one of the major funders of [Tesla Motors](#) (later renamed Tesla), an electric car company founded by entrepreneurs [Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning](#). In 2006 Tesla introduced its first car, the [Roadster](#), which could travel 245 miles (394 km) on a single charge. Unlike most previous electric vehicles, which Musk thought were stodgy and uninteresting, it was a sports car that could go from 0 to 60 miles (97 km) per hour in less than four seconds. In 2010 the company's [initial public offering](#) raised about \$226 million. Two years later Tesla introduced the Model S sedan, which was acclaimed by automotive critics for its performance and design. The company won further praise for its Model X luxury SUV, which went on the market in 2015. The Model 3, a less-expensive vehicle, went into production in 2017 and became the best-selling electric car of all time.

Tesla announced several models to be released early in the 2020s, including a semitrailer truck (the Tesla Semi) and a pickup truck, the Cybertruck. Although the Cybertruck was slated for production in 2021, supply chain disruptions, design, and production issues pushed its rollout back two years. By the time Tesla began making Cybertruck deliveries in late 2023, it boasted a reservation backlog of two million vehicles, despite the boxy angular design that excited controversy when it was first unveiled.

Dissatisfied with the projected cost (\$68 billion) of a [high-speed rail](#) system in California, Musk in 2013 proposed an alternate faster system, the [Hyperloop](#), a pneumatic tube in which a pod carrying 28 passengers would travel the 350 miles (560 km) between [Los Angeles](#) and [San Francisco](#) in 35 minutes at a top speed of 760 miles (1,220 km) per hour, nearly the [speed of sound](#). Musk claimed that the Hyperloop would cost only \$6 billion and that, with the pods departing every two minutes on average, the system could accommodate the six million people who travel that route every year. However, he stated, between running SpaceX and Tesla, he could not devote time to the Hyperloop's development.

### **X (formerly Twitter)**

Musk joined the [social media](#) service [Twitter](#) in 2009, and, as @elonmusk, he became one of the most popular accounts on the site, with more than 85 million followers as of 2022. He expressed reservations about Tesla's being publicly traded, and in August 2018 he made a series of tweets about taking the company private at a value of \$420 per share, noting that he had "secured funding." (The value of \$420 was seen as a joking reference to April 20, a day celebrated by devotees of [cannabis](#).) The following month the U.S. [Securities and Exchange Commission](#) (SEC) sued Musk for securities fraud, alleging that the tweets were "false and misleading." Shortly thereafter Tesla's board rejected the SEC's proposed settlement, reportedly because Musk had threatened to resign. However, the news sent Tesla stock plummeting, and a harsher deal was ultimately accepted. Its terms included Musk's stepping down as [chairman](#) for three years, though he was allowed to continue as CEO; his tweets were to be preapproved by Tesla lawyers, and fines of \$20 million for both Tesla and Musk were levied.

Musk was critical of Twitter's commitment to principles of [free speech](#), in light of the company's content-moderation policies. Early in April 2022, Twitter's filings with the SEC disclosed that Musk had bought more than 9 percent of the company. Shortly thereafter Twitter announced that Musk would join the company's board, but Musk decided against that and made a bid for the entire company, at a value of \$54.20 a share, for \$44 billion. Twitter's board accepted the deal, which would make him sole owner of the company. Musk stated that his plans for the company included "enhancing the product with new features, making the algorithms [open source](#) to increase trust, defeating the spam bots, and authenticating all humans." In July 2022 Musk announced that he was withdrawing his bid, stating that Twitter had not provided sufficient information about bot accounts and claiming that the company was in "material breach of multiple provisions" of the purchase agreement. Bret Taylor, the chair of Twitter's board of directors, responded by saying that the company was "committed to closing the transaction on the price and terms agreed upon with Mr. Musk." Twitter sued Musk to force him to buy the company. In September 2022 Twitter's shareholders voted to accept Musk's offer. Facing a legal battle, Musk ultimately proceeded with the deal, and it was completed in October.

Among Musk's first acts as Twitter's owner were to lay off about half the company and to allow users to purchase for \$8 a month the blue check-mark verification, which had previously been bestowed by Twitter upon notable figures. In addition, he disbanded Twitter's content-moderation body and reinstated many banned accounts, most notably that of former U.S. president [Donald Trump](#), which had been suspended after the [U.S. Capitol attack on January 6, 2021](#). Advertising revenue fell sharply as many companies withdrew their ads from the platform. Musk changed the name of the company from Twitter to X in July 2023. (Tweets became posts with the change.)

### **Politics and DOGE**

Musk had described himself as a "moderate Democrat," but his views became much more right-wing after his purchase of X. He publicly endorsed Republican presidential candidate [Donald Trump](#) after [an assassination attempt](#) on Trump in July 2024. Through his America [Political Action Committee](#) (PAC), he became the country's largest political donor, giving \$288 million to Trump and other Republican candidates.

Musk spoke at campaign rallies for Trump and through America PAC set up a sweepstakes in which he would pay \$1 million a day through [election day](#) to one voter in a key swing state. The action prompted lawsuits alleging that it amounted to paying people to vote, which is illegal.

Trump promised during his campaign that Musk and entrepreneur [Vivek Ramaswamy](#) would lead a commission, the [Department of Government Efficiency](#) (DOGE, a reference to the cryptocurrency memecoin Dogecoin), charged with making the government more efficient. Musk vowed that in that effort, he would "balance the budget immediately" by cutting \$2 trillion in government spending, which would "involve some temporary hardship."

Ramaswamy left DOGE hours after Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2025. That same day Trump issued an [executive order](#) that set up DOGE inside the United States Digital Service, which was renamed the United States DOGE Service. The order also stated that each federal agency should have a team of at least four DOGE employees. Musk became a "special government employee," a designation for someone who works for the government on a temporary basis. Many of those involved with DOGE are former or current employees of Musk's companies.

DOGE immediately went to work. On the afternoon of January 20 a DOGE team took over the office of the director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), an agency that manages the federal [civil service](#), and assumed control of key OPM databases. More than two million government employees were emailed a deferred resignation offer. It stated that they would not have to return to their offices if they resigned at the end of September 2025. (The subject line of the email, "Fork in the Road," was



the same as one used in an email Musk sent in 2022, offering resignation to Twitter employees shortly after he took over the service.) DOGE gained access to databases at the Treasury Department's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, which disburses most of the government's payments.

Musk announced on X that he and Trump would shut down the [U.S. Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), which administers [foreign aid](#). Shortly thereafter USAID's website was taken down, most of USAID's 10,000 employees were placed on administrative leave, and programs around the world were suspended. The [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH) announced that it would cut \$4 billion of "indirect costs," which support hospitals and universities of NIH grant recipients. The Institute of Education Sciences, the research division of the Department of Education, had most of its contracts canceled.

DOGE's actions led to a flurry of lawsuits. Critics of DOGE said that it had precipitated a constitutional crisis, in which the [executive branch](#) was violating the [separation of powers](#) by not spending the money that Congress had appropriated for agencies such as USAID and NIH. However, Republicans, who controlled Congress, claimed there was nothing unusual in a new administration reviewing government spending.

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# Elon Musk and President Trump's Next Goal: Fire Hundreds of Thousands of Teachers

<https://democrats-appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/elon-musk-and-president-trumps-next-goal-fire-hundreds-thousands-teachers>

March 25, 2025

Press Release

## **\*NEW FACT SHEET\***

WASHINGTON — Last week, through his unlawful executive order, President Trump took another step in his plan to eliminate the Department of Education. Next, **he plans to eliminate Title I grants** that help 26 million students learn. House Appropriations Committee and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro released a **new fact sheet** detailing the number of teachers in each district that stand to be kicked out of the classroom, leaving millions of students across the country without a teacher.

"We are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and Elon Musk and President Trump are making it worse. President Trump promised to fight for the working class, but instead, he put Elon Musk and billionaires in charge of the government. His plan to eliminate Title I grants that help 26 million students in schools across the country would mean that nearly 300,000 teachers across the United States stand to be kicked out of the classroom. This would leave millions of students without a teacher. President Trump and unchecked billionaire Elon Musk do not care about helping hardworking people build a better life or helping our kids learn. They care only about tax breaks for billionaires and the biggest corporations."

A fact sheet on the number of teachers in each district that stand to be kicked out of the classroom is **here**.

Ranking Member DeLauro's previous statements on the unlawful elimination of Education employees can be found **here** and **here**.

Her letter to Secretary McMahon demanding answers to mass firings is **here**. Her February statement on Elon Musk's and President Trump's dismantling of the Department of Education is **here**.

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## DOGE cuts \$900 million from agency that tracks American students' academic progress

<https://apnews.com/article/ies-musk-doge-education-cuts-4461d7bdbe9d55c5a411d8465999b011>

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal research agency that tracks the progress of America's students is being hit with almost \$900 million in cuts after [Elon Musk's](#) Department of Government Efficiency found no need for much of its work.

It's unclear to what degree the Education Department's Institute of Education Sciences will continue to exist after Musk's team slashed scores of contracts. Industry groups said at least 169 contracts were suddenly terminated Monday, accounting for much of the institute's work.

Some of the biggest contracts were for long-term studies that track students' learning from kindergarten through high school, a study evaluating strategies for teaching elementary school reading, and research on the effectiveness of supports for youth with disabilities, according to list of cuts obtained by The Associated Press.

The action will not affect the institute's primary work, including the [NAEP assessment](#), known as the nation's report card, and the [College Scorecard](#), a database of university costs and outcomes, [Education Department](#) spokesperson Madison Biedermann said.

The cuts raised alarm among advocates who said they could hurt the accountability of America's education system, leaving the nation in the dark on schools' effectiveness. Historically, [achievement gaps](#) have shown low-income students and students of color falling behind their peers.

The cuts are counterproductive and destructive, said Rachel Dinkes, president and CEO of the Knowledge Alliance, a coalition of education research firms.

"Cutting out at the knees the one independent agency that helps improve student outcomes is ridiculous," Dinkes said.

Musk's grip on the Education Department was dealt a setback Tuesday when the agency agreed to temporarily block DOGE workers from more than a dozen internal systems containing sensitive information. DOGE has been tasked with [slashing costs](#) across the federal government. As part of a lawsuit challenging its access, the department agreed to block Musk's team until at least Monday while a judge weighs a broader pause.

Among the projects being cut is a study exploring how to accelerate math learning for students in fourth and fifth grade, according to a document obtained by the AP. Known as ReSolve, the project was being led by research group MDRC.

Last month IES released the latest NAEP results, revealing that America's children have [continued to lose ground](#) on reading skills and made little improvement in math in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activate Research, a small business, lost four contracts and plans to lay off at least 20 of its 28 workers. The company was hired to ensure accuracy and objectivity in reports. When founder Dinah Sparks announced the company was winding down Tuesday, she had a message for her team: "We are not waste," she said. "We did valuable work for the U.S. taxpayer."

Another small business lost multiple contracts after being hired to collect basic information on the nation's schools. The company started laying off workers this week, according to an employee who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation.

Congress gave the institute about \$800 million last year, roughly 1% of the Education Department's annual budget.

Two prominent research associations jointly called for the contracts to be reinstated, saying much of IES' work is mandated by Congress and relies on contracts to support its limited staff. The groups said 169 contracts had been cut, curbing the institute's ability to report data on school finances and student outcomes.

"Without such research, student learning and development will be harmed," according to leaders of the American Educational Research Association and the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics.

The institute oversees a wide range of work, including the administration of the NAEP exam and U.S. participation in [PISA](#), an assessment that compares academic progress across nations. It's also a major funder of education research and keeps a database of research that has shown results in improving education.

IES shines a light on inequity and its work is "more than just numbers and statistics," said the Education Trust, a nonprofit research and advocacy group. "Without it, we are left in the dark, unable to see where educational gaps exist or how to close them," the group said in a statement.

Mark Schneider, a former IES commissioner appointed by President Donald Trump in 2018, said the cuts give the new administration a chance to rethink programs that have changed little in decades. But so far it's unclear if or how the contracts will be replaced.

"The question is not what happened on Monday, it's what happens next," Schneider said. "If we just swing this sledgehammer, break all this stuff and say, OK, done, then we've wasted an opportunity to fix things."

Democratic Sen. [Patty Murray](#), a former teacher and member of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, said she will be "sounding the alarm" to fight the cuts.

"An unelected billionaire is now bulldozing the research arm of the Department of Education — taking a wrecking ball to high-quality research and basic data we need to improve our public schools," the Washington senator said in a statement. "Cutting off these investments after the contract has already been inked is the definition of wasteful."

Trump has promised to abolish the Education Department and turn its power over to states and schools. The White House is considering an order that would direct Trump's education chief to dismantle the agency as far as possible while calling on Congress to fully shut it down.

It's unclear how far Trump could act on his own to slash the department's spending, much of which is ordered by Congress.





## Judge Blocks Education Officials from Providing Sensitive Data to Musk's Team

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/24/us/politics/musk-privacy-education-department.html>

The ruling on Monday extended an earlier one barring Elon Musk and his associates from reviewing student loan data and other potentially sensitive records.



**The Education Department in Washington.**

A federal judge in Maryland granted a preliminary injunction on Monday barring top officials at the Education Department and the Office of Personnel Management from turning over sensitive data to Elon Musk and members of his Department of Government Efficiency team while a privacy lawsuit continues.

The [order](#) was the latest development in a category of lawsuits that have taken aim at Mr. Musk's access to federal databases containing personal information about U.S. citizens. The suits have largely succeeded thus far in securing rulings blocking Mr. Musk's team from that type of data.

In an [opinion](#) accompanying the order on Monday, Judge Deborah L. Boardman of the Federal District Court for the District of Maryland wrote that the Privacy Act of 1974 clearly required stronger protection of

personal and financial data that could be vacuumed up in Mr. Musk's efforts to scour agency records.

The American Federation of Teachers had sued to halt those efforts, saying that its members routinely submitted sensitive data to the department for help with student loan forgiveness and other programs, and had not consented to their data being scrutinized by Mr. Musk's team, which despite its name is not an executive-branch department. Judge Boardman [issued a restraining order last month](#) and extended it on Monday, citing Congress's reasoning when it passed the Privacy Act more than 50 years ago.

"Those concerns are just as salient today," she wrote. "No matter how important or urgent the President's DOGE agenda may be, federal agencies must execute it in accordance with the law. That likely did not happen in this case."

Federal judges in a number of cases have been sympathetic to arguments that Mr. Musk's sweep through federal data systems have come at the expense of ordinary people who handed their financial records and personal details over to the government for routine services.

Last week, a judge [ordered the Social Security Administration](#) to ensure that any data given to Mr. Musk's team was anonymized or redacted first. And last month, a judge in another case [took similar steps to protect taxpayer information](#) stored at the Treasury Department.

Lawyers behind those various challenges have argued that the injunctions are increasingly urgent, especially in light of fears that data submitted by private citizens could be used for other purposes beyond a routine audit, including identifying and targeting undocumented immigrants for deportation. Over the weekend, [a draft report of a deal](#) between the Internal Revenue Service and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office indicated that the Trump administration was already moving to use data for that purpose, even without Mr. Musk's team serving as a go-between.

Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, said in a statement on Monday that Mr. Musk and his team "have been running roughshod over Americans' privacy." The judge, she said, had acted to maintain a firewall between those efforts and the data of tens of millions of people held by the Education Department.

In her ruling, Judge Boardman reiterated that the union appeared likely to prevail in the case. But as in other cases, the rapid pace at which the Trump administration has moved to dismantle agencies and outrun the courts could limit some of the practical effects of the order.

Already this month, top officials at the Education Department rushed to [cut the agency's work force in half](#). And an executive order President Trump signed last week directed the agency's leaders to find ways to spin off some of its functions, potentially [moving](#) some of the databases at issue in the lawsuit to other departments, such as the Small Business Administration or the Department of Health and Human Services.

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**Kindly visit these Web Links [Videos]**

[01] Educators, Parents, and Students Demand Elon Musk Stay Out of the Department of Education

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfWpyEji6yU> [19:16]

[02] Josh Dahn: Building a School with Elon Musk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qspI5osScxM> [1:02:15]

[03] Elon Musk Is Starting A STEM Focused School in Austin Texas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys1mXu3Iys8> [10:36]

[04] Elon Musk's Ad Astra School: Innovative Learning for the Future

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRjLMib87zE> [19:31]

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